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# LIBERIA: BUILDING A FUTURE OF PEACE AND SECURITY

*"At a time when freedom is on the march around the world, it is vital that the continent of Africa be a place of democracy and prosperity and hope.... Africa is a continent of promise, and the United States wants to help the people of Africa realize the brighter future they deserve."*

– President George W. Bush

The cornerstone of President Bush's Africa policy has been the promotion of peace, security, and democracy in partnership with African countries and regional organizations. During the past 4 years, there were more than 50 democratic elections in Africa, including in Liberia.

## Liberian Elections

Liberia held free and fair presidential and legislative elections on October 11, 2005, and Ellen Johnson Sirleaf was elected president in a runoff on November 8, 2005. She will be inaugurated in Monrovia, on January 16, 2006 – the continent's first elected female president.

## Challenges Ahead

After a 14-year civil war, the new government faces a number of hurdles as it leads its citizens toward a stable and democratic future. These include:

- Foreign debt totaling approximately \$3.5 billion
- A shattered economy and infrastructure
- No electricity, postal or telephone service
- Sanitation and roadways in shambles
- Eroded health care and education, with illiteracy rates of 44 percent
- Eighty percent unemployment

## U.S. Assistance

Under President Bush's leadership, the United States Government is working to assist in Liberia's

### U.S. SUPPORT FOR DEMOCRACY PROGRAMS IN 2004-2005

- \$481 million for UN peace-building operations
- \$75 million for reintegration, including work and education programs for youths and former combatants
- \$60 million for training and equipping civilian-led Liberian military and police
- \$23 million for rule of law, judicial structures and civilian police programs
- \$10 million supporting the October 2005 elections

reconstruction through advancing political and economic freedoms, promoting peace and regional security, advocating good governance, and supporting improvements in health and education.

## Reconstruction Assistance

The United States' contribution to Liberia's reconstruction for fiscal years 2004-2006 will total nearly \$1 billion. This funding will support demobilizing soldiers, restoring security, supporting community reintegration, and establishing rule of law.

## Humanitarian and Development Assistance

The United States has provided life-saving support for Liberia's people, many of who have been refugees or internally displaced. In September 2005, the U.S. Government became a partner with Liberia through the Governancy and Economic Management Assistance Program (GEMAP), a reform effort helping the Liberian Government raise revenues and tackle its debt and development challenges. U.S. humanitarian assistance in 2004-2005 included:

- \$90 million to help Liberian refugees, internally displaced persons (IDPs) and conflict-affected communities
- \$44 million in food assistance and livelihood regeneration for IDPs
- \$9 million for health issues including HIV/AIDS
- \$6 million for GEMAP